ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC
LIBRARY

Royal Academy of Music

BULLETIN

JUNE 2015

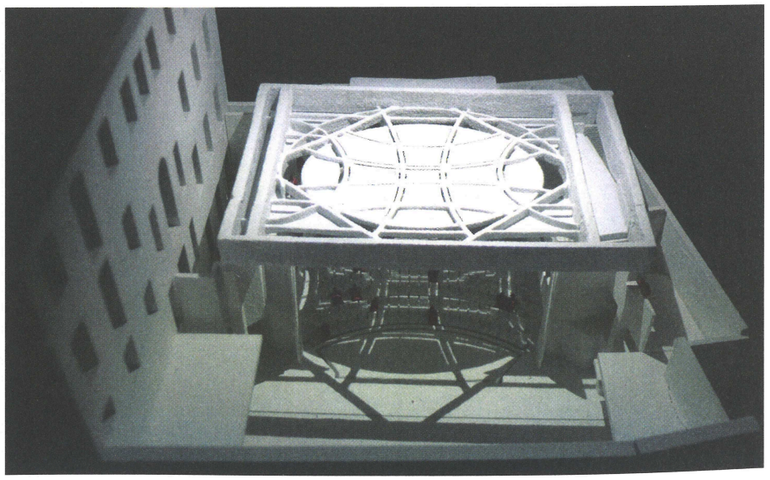
A New Theatre
Royal Academy Opera on the move

Interview
The Academy's Principal looks to the future

Menuhin Competition
The international competition returns home

Royal Academy of Music
Marylebone Road
London
NW1 5HT

T: 020 7873 7419
E: publicity@ram.ac.uk
Reg. Charity no. 310007



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With thanks to James Chau, Ian Ritchie Architects and Alyson Frazier

Welcome

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC
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A forward-facing look at Academy life and news...

Welcome to our latest edition of the Bulletin, the Academy's publication dedicated to sharing our most recent news. In this edition we look forwards and cover the Academy's plans and ambitions for the future. The Principal shares his vision, and we give an insight into changes to the Academy's estate for 2016.

The Bulletin covers only a fraction of activities for the year ahead; please look online at **www.ram.ac.uk** for events, news and much more.

Alumni Special edition: look out for our next Bulletin, early in 2016. We celebrate the Academy's alumni and their achievements throughout the musical world, from the engine-room of the profession to the super-stars with major international contracts. If you are an Academy graduate do please send us your own news – please email alumni@ram.ac.uk or contact our Alumni Network staff on telephone 020 7873 7390.

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Preview

Highlights for the year ahead...

In our Marylebone home, across Britain and in international venues, our students perform daily alongside world-class performers and conductors. Here are few highlights for the rest of the year ahead.

2015 AT THE ACADEMY

- Masaaki Suzuki and Rachel Podger join us for our latest collaboration with The Juilliard School. Our historical performance specialists will tour an all-Bach programme to Boston and New York, Thomaskirche in Leipzig as part of the Bachfest 2015, and then finally to the Academy.

- Our Musical Theatre Department present their summer shows: Amour and Carousel.

- Orchestral concerts with Edward Gardner, Robin Ticciati, Trevor Pinnock, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Semyon Bychkov, Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Sir Mark Elder.

- Our Menuhin Professor of Music, Maxim Vengerov, returns in June and September to work with students in public masterclasses as well as one-to-one teaching.

- A series of events surrounding John Adams's visit to the Academy in October 2015.

- The Academy Manson Ensemble once again works side-by-side with the London Sinfonietta concluding in a performance at the Southbank Centre in December.

- Head of Piano Joanna MacGregor's Summer Piano Festival takes place on 25th and 26th June.

- Oliver Knussen, recently appointed as Richard Rodney Bennett Professor of Music, works again with the Academy Manson Ensemble.

- In June we celebrate Boulez turning ninety with two concerts at the Aldeburgh Festival.

- Junior Academy continue their eightieth anniversary celebrations with a concert featuring alumnus Thomas Gould on 4th July.

- On 7th October Rachel Podger, Micaela Comberti Chair of Baroque Violin, directs Academy Baroque Ensemble and is presented with the Royal Academy of Music/Kohn Foundation Bach Prize.

Photos from top, left to right: Yan Pascal Tortelier, Piano Festival, Edward Gardner, Maxim Vengerov, Rachel Podger, Robin Ticciati, Oliver Knussen.

Interview

A Bold Vision

I've always regarded the Academy as being a place where you're taken that little bit further, asked just a few more questions of yourself...

Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

The Principal talks to alumna Rebecca Alexander on how the Academy is evolving – both gradually and radically.

RA: In the broadest terms, how has the Academy changed over the past ten years?

JF-A: Well, there's certainly more going on now than then! With the increasing versatility of the outstanding young musicians here, ever-improving standards of preparation, professionalism and artistic output, the place does seem to be moving ahead and, crucially, with the times. I'm sure there are many reasons for this – including better teaching and approaches to learning – but a large part of it is clearly self-generated by students and how they set their own goals and agendas.

RA: What are the advantages of these trends?

JF-A: I've always regarded the Academy as being the place where you're taken that little bit further, asked just a few more questions of yourself, as well as being reminded that you shouldn't waste this precious time whilst you've got the chance in this bustling and busy place. And yet the more you ask of people the more you have to try and ensure it all works within the bigger educational picture. The 'study experience' differs for each and every student, according to their programme of study and previous experience. With many nationalities (nearly sixty), and diverse backgrounds, around 750 students all arrive with different expectations. Some areas are more developed than others, they come with many different types of skills and values, and also with many different temperaments and ambitions. Also, much of what we offer here is 'bespoke', and yet there are non-negotiable elements too – aspects we reckon every Academy musician should be exposed to. Then it's a question of finding a stimulating and workable balance (within the programmes of study) between the prescribed and the individually tailored components. It isn't simple – and it's rarely perfect – but I'm in awe of the heads of programmes, tutors and academic administrators who pull it all together… and the students who 'work' the staff in the most productive ways.

RA: I sense that the Academy has a very particular performance culture. Or is that just my imagination?

JF-A: I think you're right and it probably starts with the vital chemistry and 'centrifugal' place of our principal-study professors and the way progress in the 'studio' triggers off confidence and enterprise in students over all the other things we do. We must never forget that our teachers are the main reason why students choose the Academy. They deliver so much more than specific instrumental, vocal or composition training: they are the key professional development mentors. And they will tell you what it's really like out there. Following hard on the heels of the master-apprentice teaching comes Our Community (big O and C intended!). These are the multi-layers of activity defining the quality of the vocational preparation through the breadth of the collaborative life here. Whether you're working with Iain Ledingham doing Bach Cantatas on period instruments, Oliver Knussen tackling Birtwistle in Manson Ensemble or Semyon Bychkov rehearsing Mahler in Symphony Orchestra – or indeed Peter Sheppard Skærved or Raymond Holden's work in their respective contexts – all these opportunities make for kaleidoscopic demands. Responsibility will always fall squarely on the resourcefulness, responsiveness and capability of each individual – but only as they learn how to contribute to the common aims of the project over the course of its preparation. This skill can't be learnt in a practice room.

The Academy is lucky in having an unrivalled strength in depth within its student body. For instance, it never happens that a shortage of decent bassoons means the horns can't concentrate on, say, refinement of tuning and blend – of the kind they'll need to apply at the highest level when they leave. The point is that a lot of crucial teaching and learning happens between students in various ensembles; they learn from each other and set examples to each other, often without knowing it. It's an endlessly fascinating process.

RA: How have the programmes of study evolved in recent years?

JF-A: This is a vast question involving many layers. To start with, I've always felt particularly committed to the holistic shape and content of the programmes because my first real job here was starting and running the BMus. Now, the cyclical review is a far more effective and reflective process. As I speak, the BMus is being scrutinised as part of our five-year Periodic Review and I'm very excited by the proposals. In essence, it's about making more sense than before about how each element interlocks, at the same time respecting that we have to cater for a very wide range.

This also involves finding new ways to bring the performance elements into closer relief with everything else – including our Museum and Collections, and giving our distinctive research culture a chance to have a greater impact on students' experiences. The way the Masters programmes have developed over the last few years has been especially radical. In making them much more portfolio-based, and increasingly focused on professional contexts, the results have been quite startling.

Now we have added the Professional and Advanced Diplomas and with greater scope after recently receiving Degree-Awarding Powers from the Privy Council, we're full of ideas! There is this wonderful sense of freedom now where we can really think about how different programmes and pathways can suit individual needs at postgraduate level.

RA: You talk about the creative industries and, in particular, how musical excellence across the board is beginning to find a new place within the identity, profitability and reputation of the UK. Is this quite recent and how is it reflected in individual career-paths?

JF-A: Yes, I think this is probably another significant change in the past ten years. We all know that classical music has various challenges – from, for example, how it's positioned in the curriculum – but it has also evolved in many positive ways. I feel now that we're connected at the hip to the creative industries, with so many collaborations – both in business and cross-disciplinary artistic arenas. You only need to look at how composers here operate with partners in theatre, animation, business, multi-media, and so on, to see a wealth of examples.

Of course, it's great seeing the GDP of the UK improve on the back of our

I feel now that we're connected at the hip to the creative industries, with so many collaborations...

successful students – as part of the 'agglomeration' of tourism for example – but we also need to make sure that more goes into musicians' pockets. The pay structure for the profession has become incoherent and we need to find ways of ensuring the most talented musicians' pay is commensurate with their expertise and the product they deliver. Anyway, don't get me onto this now, because it's a mega bee in my bonnet!

The other point is that musicians don't necessarily see the profession as a 'fixed' institution; indeed, we're encouraging students to make what they want out of a musical life. We all know it's a hard road getting there but it's no good whining about the status quo. We all have to start thinking in different ways about what the new possibilities are for enlightened professional development – a concept which was kicking in ten years ago but quite unformed.

RA: How do you measure the success of the Academy in the short and long term?

JF-A: Wow. I haven't had that question since my interview for Principal! Well, the short term in thirty seconds... I suppose by the success of the work during the year as it unfolds, the quality of students we recruit each December, the positive and constructive atmosphere of the place, the sense that we're listening to students and solving problems quickly and efficiently – those for a start. In the long term, it ranges from the quality of staff we continue to employ, progression planning in many areas of management and estates, fund-raising and how our bold strategies lead to results.

Of course a particularly key point is the destinations of our alumni. I don't just mean the 'stars', however we define them, but anyone gainfully employed in music, fulfilling their potential and realising their ambitions and dreams. This is why Alumni Network is so important: alums staying in touch ensures that we keep on each others' radar and that's got to be beneficial for all of us. On the destinations point, the quality and range of innovative careers now going on – from those who go down quite conventional routes, such as orchestras and opera, to those who are forging their own path in various ways – is quite remarkable. Just see how many extraordinarily different professional musical careers are being followed by people who have left in the past ten years. I immediately think of those who have just received ARAMs: most of them are under thirty-five and each one has established a quite distinct professional profile.

Working with colleagues assembling data about alumni makes us realise that it's a 'very Academy' thing to be trained at a high level in a single discipline and then spread your talent out across myriad genres and unsuspecting workplaces. I think much of this is stimulated by the sheer range of music taught at the Academy now and how students and departments cross-fertilise with growing ease. For example, if you put on a Musical Theatre show students from all departments are eager to play, whereas ten years ago they would have thought it was a bit 'niche' and not really for them. In the same way there are 'modern' string players who want to play baroque music, and have developed a good grasp of style, so there's a general erosion of traditional expectations and fixed territory.

RA: Facilities are key in a conservatoire but especially in an iconic building which can't go up or down!

JF-A: Who says we can't?! Again we should remind ourselves that facilities have grown hugely over the past ten years. We have made more sense of York Gate, built the practice rooms (the T Rooms out of the 'Void') and at the beginning of 2014 we obtained the lease for twenty new practice rooms in Cross Keys down the High Street, improved

It's a 'very Academy' thing to be trained at a high level in a single discipline and then spread your talent out across myriad genres

and developed ancillary areas, as well as gaining a lease on St Mark's Church for rehearsals and recording. I suppose the big current issue is the effect of the new theatre and recital hall build and the extra space that whole complex will create in other parts of the building when it's finished in 2017.

This will be the most transformational physical improvement in the Academy since it moved in 1911 from Tenterden Street, or York Gate was acquired through the Heritage Lottery Fund in the late 1990s. I should say that the plans for alternative space next year are shaping up well and we'll be announcing them soon. When we look back in 2017 we'll have a very different sort of shape to the building. We are, in fact, building 'up' with a new recital hall above the new theatre accessible from a glass atrium.

This, and the substantially rebuilt and reconfigured theatre, will look and sound astonishing – and the student benefit will be very significant. I must say that the Governing Body have made quite a remarkable contribution to the costs of this major project. There's a story which I can't wait to tell (embargoed at present!) of their generosity and belief in what's happening and the commitment of time they have given behind the day-to-day management. It's a very complex precision game building in the solar plexus of the Academy and it's taken five years to get to this point.

But estates ambitions can't stop there. I think that if you're going to compete as a major world-renowned institution you have to ask yourself all the time what's needed to deliver the best. We have such a range of disciplines with specialist requirements: opera, jazz, musical theatre, for example. We need enough large rooms to have medium to large-scale events and rehearsals running simultaneously. If we are bringing in great artists, for example John Adams, Robin Ticciati and Trevor Pinnock in the same week (which we will have later this year), you need appropriate spaces. It's a big ongoing challenge.

RA: How important are our Collections? There's been quite a lot of activity of late hasn't there?

JF-A: They are important in practical and research terms but also crucial to our reputation and identity – helping to define who we are and what we value. During the past ten years, we have benefited from some really major, very significant gifts such as the Mackerras and Nadia

Boulanger-Gardiner Collections, the Kenny Wheeler Gift, as well as the imminent arrival of major parts of the Sir Colin Davis archive. Students are discovering that working closely with Mackerras's scores and listening to the interpretations of such an exceptional pioneer yields untold possibilities, not least understanding the working practices of a great figure.

It joins the famous Wood, Barbirolli and Klemperer Collections, and with Ferenc Fricsay it's shaping up into a very nice institutional archive which I think mirrors the artistic ambitions and priorities of the Academy. The valuable Italian stringed instruments are very important to us too – perhaps our greatest non-human asset. The Viotti ex-Bruce Stradivarius deserves special mention as the most prestigious acquisition in the last ten years.

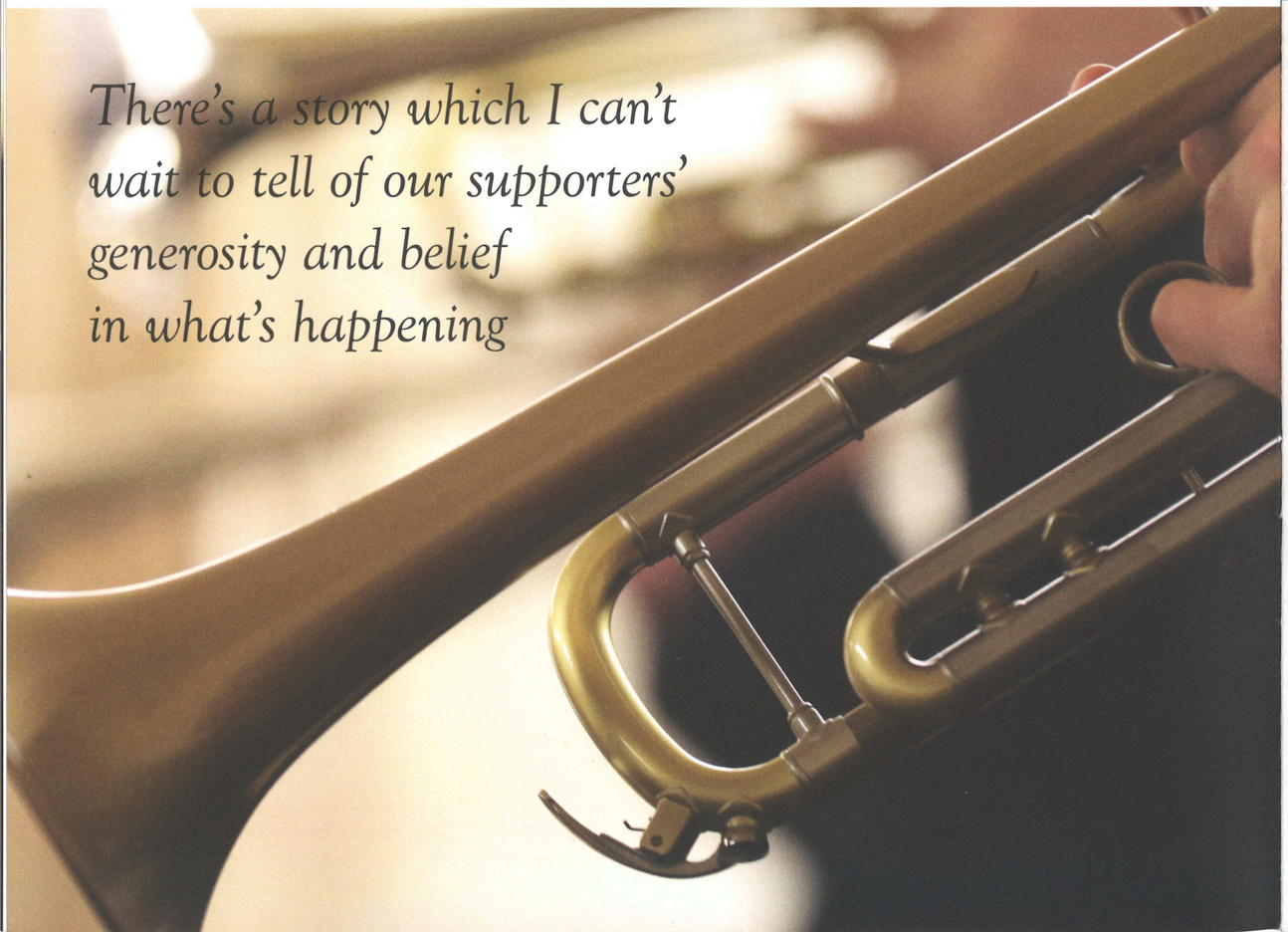
RA: Why do you think audiences at the Academy have grown so much in the last five or so years? Has this been part of a conscious strategy?

JF-A: It's been a very conscious move and it's paid off, I think. It has involved many things: the introduction of the box office when the foyer was re-done, the new professional front-of-house team, the increase in enterprising concert series, such as the Tuesday and Thursday Chamber Series, 400+, the Bach Cantatas (incredibly sought-after), Friday lunchtimes with the likes of Pinnock, Gardner, Elder, Bychkov, Tortelier and Ticciati – quite a peerless home team of regular conducting visitors – as well as the Vengerov masterclasses and many other visiting luminaries… I could go on with Royal Academy Opera, Musical Theatre, fantastic jazz concerts, the complete Haydn Symphonies series and all those departmental projects like Zappa, Reich, the Schoenberg Private Performances and commissions from Anthony Payne which have led to widely-reviewed CDs, the Barbirolli and Henry Wood Lectures, the First World War exhibition. I think it's become a remarkable hub of activity where there's something for everyone. And most of it's free! Also, with the redesign of the website and diary, this concentrated effort ensures we communicate our programme of events to increasingly wider audiences.

RA: People are always amazed once they cross the threshold but there's still a lot more to do to make people realise what we offer and that it's for everyone. Isn't that true?

JF-A: Yes. Open Academy is a very important part of that climate at the younger end of the spectrum – and that's all linked to how we want to recruit more people who would otherwise not think the Academy was a place for them. If you go out and have thirty different associations with local schools, not only do our own students become very good animateurs and communicators, but it's a very good way of getting young people thinking what might be possible for them at the equivalent age. I am very excited that with Howard Ionascu at the helm of Junior Academy we can now move to bring Junior and Senior Academy closer together. It can only lead to better opportunities and a better articulated journey to help dispel the idea that 'the Royal Academy of Music is only for certain people'. It's happening fast but the momentum needs to keep gathering.

RA: I have noticed that a new, emerging generation of professorial appointments is complementing the current roster of distinguished staff at the Academy. Is that intentional?



There's a story which I can't wait to tell of our supporters' generosity and belief in what's happening

JF-A: We want to hire the best. While some staff bring untold experience, others have a greater connection to present-day professional life and how students prepare for a career in 2015. So, yes, I want a combination. We have a ninety-year-old and twenty-three-year-old professor under the same roof. Isn't that brilliant? And several in between! We've made a lot of changes to heads of department in the last five years as quite a few of our longest-serving staff have retired from those intensive day-to-day responsibilities. They're still contributing notably of course – and many of them are just as busy. All of the current heads have sought to freshen their roster and to build a generation of really outstanding and prominent players and teachers who are suited to our way of working.

RA: The growth of external collaborations have become a really key aspect in the last ten years. And there's another big one with Juilliard about to come about.

JF-A: In the blinking of an eye it seems, we've established some wonderful relationships, such as the example you refer to with The Juilliard School. This started with a series of chamber exchanges, a composition CD, joint-orchestra concerts with Elton John, two Proms with Colin Davis and John Adams, the great 2011 opera co-commission of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and David Pountney (Kommilitonen!) and now, this summer, we have a Bach tour under Masaaki Suzuki with performances in New York, Boston, Leipzig (St Thomas's) and London in our cantata series. We also have a strong rapport with the London Sinfonietta, a growing connection with Aldeburgh, an enterprising recording contract with Linn – all of them are very important and I've only mentioned a tiny proportion. Most recently, I've been to Japan and I'm very excited at the prospect of consolidating major relationships there.

RA: The Academy is known for its long history as Britain's oldest conservatoire, but how can you ensure that it remains truly distinctive and at the forefront of music tuition?

JF-A: This is the type of question someone in my position should be asking every day. The question is not just 'how do you remain at the forefront' but how can you develop the ideal and idea of 'what the Academy is' in the arena of national and global music education? I think we have a much more refined idea of that since we worked with McKinsey a couple of years ago to try and define our distinctive place, what types of things we

We have a ninety-year-old and twenty-three-year-old professor under the same roof. Isn't that brilliant?

should be consolidating and what are the areas for improvement.

Staying at, or near, the top in specific terms? Recruit better students, hire the very best teachers, offer the best opportunities, and be prepared to eat humble pie if what you're doing doesn't provide students with the best chance of success – and be prepared to turn on a sixpence and improve something. That's broadly how I measure it.

Providing leadership in the profession by sharing and contributing to other parts of the sector and, in return, being inspired by others, is part of gauging what you're doing alongside others. Somehow this ratchets everybody up a notch and makes us all more aware of what you need to do to remain at the forefront. I think the UK is very lucky in having conservatoires of quality where no-one can afford to rest on their laurels; none of them are too big and there's real choice for an international musical community... but being in London is culturally worth its weight in gold.

RA: Looking ahead, what are some other ambitions for the Academy?

JF-A: I suppose ambitions work on many different levels. I would like the Academy to be 'The Conservatoire of Choice' for students of the right level, passion and dedication to partake fully in what we offer here, to understand more acutely what our distinctive 'offer' is, practically, intellectually and creatively, so people leave the Academy believing that what they're doing really can make a difference. People who want just to come here and pass time doing something very well don't interest me. I want people who really believe they are on this world to make music and they know it's a way of life, not just a job. They need to know that they'll probably not make a lot of money but they're going to offset that against what they have – those things that cannot be articulated in terms of financial gain.

RA: In a continually changing profession, what do you believe are the most invaluable skills for young musicians today?

JF-A: Very good question and also a hard one! There are certain things that have not changed. You need to be equipped in all the ways good musicians have always needed to be equipped. You have got to be technically adept, have a continually refined ear, you have to develop your interpretative voice, alongside skills to enable you to think fast on your feet. They can be things like sight-reading, improvisation and transposition, amongst many others. But what used to be ancillary interests are now core skills, along with the professional-playing attributes that I've just mentioned. I think students are realising that they've got to be ultra-active and entrepreneurial, reflected in the flexibility of the types of work they are able (or willing) to take on as well as self-generating initiatives. Rather than sitting and thinking 'I am a great oboist' and waiting for the phone to ring, oboists are now getting together with other musicians, putting groups together and finding ways of getting concerts and curating projects, building up a support base for people to help them, thinking about how to put on events in different locations and not expecting someone else to do it. And that's before we've got to social media, websites or the presentation and ownership of material, including recordings. You have, largely, to make your own work and luck – and lots of Academy graduates are doing it very successfully, and increasingly so.

RA: How does your work as a performer affect your work here?

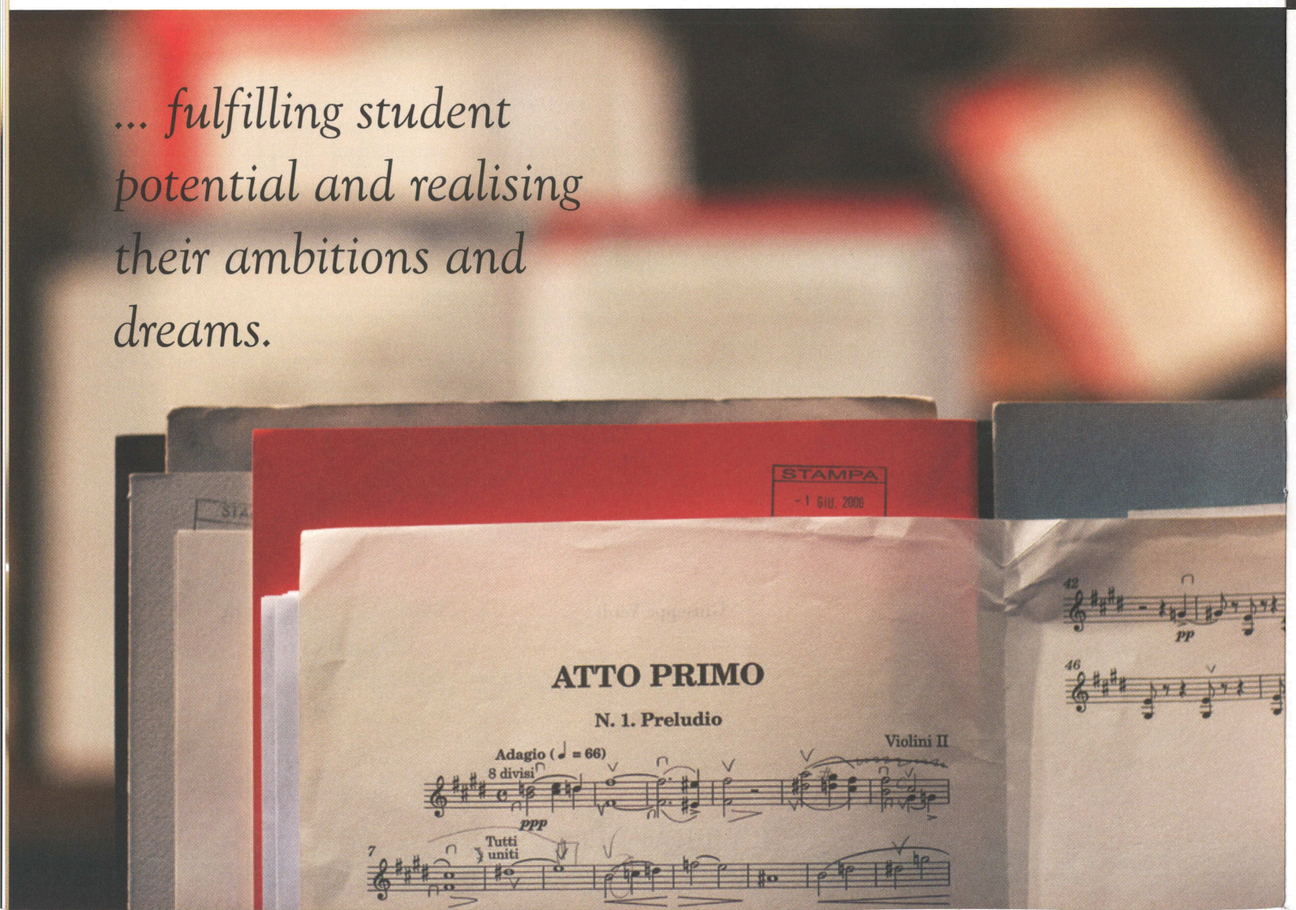
JF-A: Getting the creative juices flowing has got to be a good thing, if only as a relief to the pressures that inevitably build up in a job like this. Having footholds in the profession outside this place can, I think, be useful. Certainly, I've made links with musicians outside who now play an important part here, and I'm proud of that. In any case, if you've just played a concert or made a recording, as a trumpet player or producer in my case, then you do feel a bit more confident in giving a small piece of advice to somebody – because they know I know what it feels like and I'm keeping in reasonable shape. I can speak with a little more authority about ways I might pace a programme, how to think about programming a CD or audition. It's much easier for me to give advice if I can still feel a bit of vibration in my lips (metaphorically!). That said I would never claim to be able to offer any technical advice on the trumpet: I'm a lousy trumpet teacher because I don't really know how it all works. I just love playing it. I have been lucky enough with Linn to have a solo project every couple of years. I relish, in a very small way, being able with my fabulous pianist-arranger Daniel-Ben Pienaar, to develop repertoire, now being published through Resonata Press, where trumpet players can play top-drawer duo music (beyond the staple Hindemith or Enescu) and investigate the special interpretative possibilities of performing some of the 'canon' – and a few crazy things. That's why I do it. I'm the last person someone would invite to play in a symphony orchestra but the expressive potential of the instrument can be explored in all sorts of other ways, and notably in repertoire that wasn't written for the instrument but can bring new challenging dimensions.

RA: How about production and writing?

JF-A: Production I feel passionate about because I think it combines a lot of my performance, aural and artistic interests – especially with the musicians and companies I've worked with over the years. Now I'm committed to passing on the production 'dark arts' and I've really enjoyed my recent sessions with postgraduates. We're plotting ways where students can attend sessions and learn the production business. I was very lucky in getting the opportunity to start the ball rolling with the Academy label eighteen years ago but I never really considered it previously as a means of 'education' for producers. Producers need to be musicians first and foremost: the better the musician, alongside the specific skills, the better the results. Writing? Well, I still do a few things for Gramophone and I enjoy the odd BBC Radio 3 slot. I did a 'Building a Library' recently on Mozart Horn Concertos. A Guildhall professor won!

RA: When speaking to a prospective student, what do you think makes 'Academy life' special?

JF-A: In a nutshell, I think it's that very strong sense of belonging, a productive mentality amongst like-minded people working together, alongside an indefinable energy and friendliness. It's essentially a very supportive environment. I think it's a pretty unstuffy place. Respect is earned not assumed. Collaboration is all and the more you put in, the more you get out of it. If you want it on a plate, this place isn't for you.



A change of scene

Theatre Project 2015–16

In recent years our facilities have expanded significantly. While Cross Keys added to our practice room provision, the Sir Elton John/Ray Cooper Organ provides a focal point to our wonderful Duke's Hall and has been acclaimed as one of the most astounding of concert instruments.

We are committed to ensuring that our facilities represent the exceptional quality of performance that is synonymous with the Academy. The theatre project exemplifies this determination and will provide our students with superior facilities.

Work has begun on what promises to be our most ambitious project for years. The two world-class spaces will enhance our renowned Marylebone premises and rival performance venues throughout London.

Celebrated architect Ian Ritchie CBE has designed an intimate and stunningly adaptable theatre space equipped to deliver all forms of classical and contemporary opera and musical theatre works. In addition, a new 100-seat recital hall above the theatre, incorporating the latest recording technologies, will add to our growing facilities and provide further performance space for our talented students.

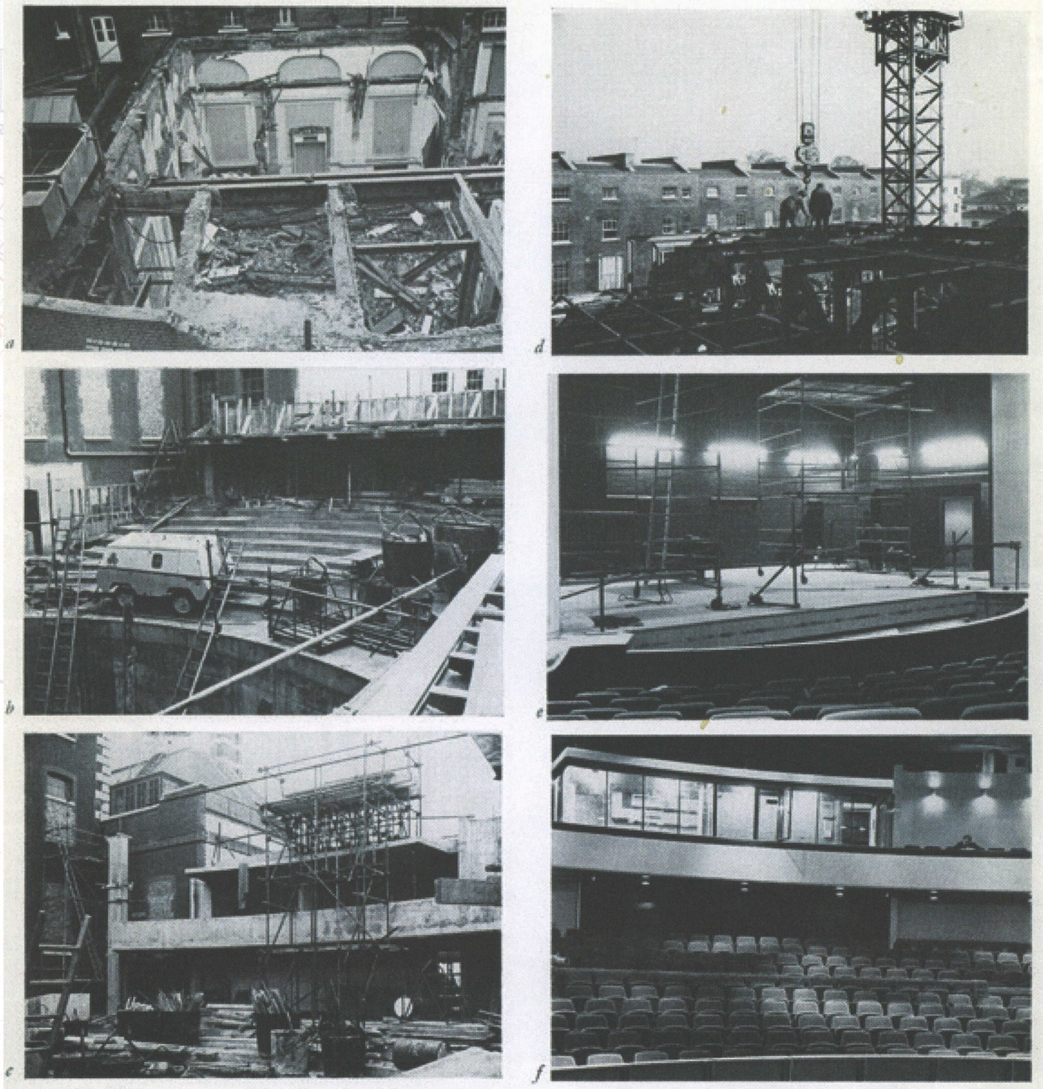
During the redevelopment, students will have the opportunity to perform in venues across the city including the stunning and legendary Victorian music hall, Hackney Empire, Shoreditch Town Hall and the vast and extraordinary underground space of Ambika P3. The diversity of these spaces allows for many exciting production opportunities and enhances the learning experience of our exceptional students.

Decanting Academy activities has also enabled us to review our strategy for long term space needs. We are delighted to announce major new space leases at St Mark's Church and Regent's University, and thanks to the generosity of David Tang, at the China Exchange in the heart of Soho.

Tickets for Le nozze di Figaro at the Hackney Empire are on sale now. See www.hackneyempire.co.uk for more information and how to book.

'I was swept away by the brio of this brilliant performance'

The Spectator (Royal Academy Opera Puccini double bill)



Photos by Douglas Hawkridge FRAM

Retrospective

Theatre Rebuild 1977

Our Theatre last underwent major redevelopment in 1977. The image above shows an illustrated page published in the programme for The Official Opening of the theatre on Wednesday 26th October 1977. The building was opened by our then-president HRH Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, and Purcell's Fairy Queen (Act IV) was performed as well as Tobermory (first performance) by John Gardner and Trial by Jury by alumnus, Arthur Sullivan. The photographs record the progress in building the theatre, including the destruction of the previous theatre, over a period between February 1974 and May 1977.

A new digital identity

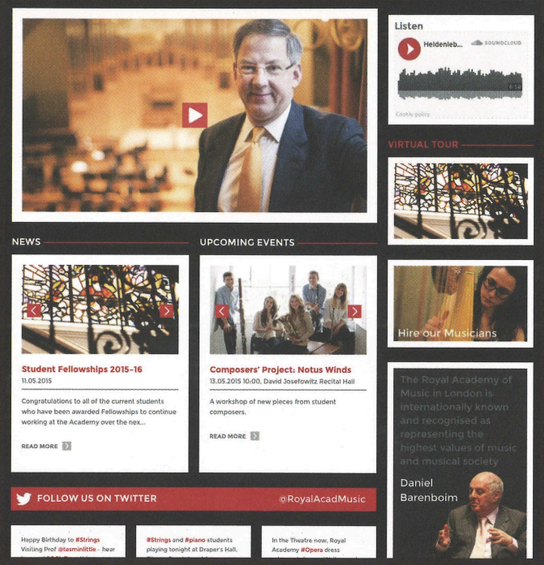
ram.ac.uk

As our building undergoes some major developments, our digital home has led the way with a new multimedia design.

The design reflects the Academy's diverse culture and continually expanding activities in the name of excellence. We hope it conveys our dual commitment to innovation alongside a fundamental respect for our history and traditions.

For those who cannot visit us in person, our website has to provide a glimpse of our collective mission, character and values – as well as imparting the very special atmosphere of this place.

Our new site incorporates photos, audio and video; input has come from students, alumni, friends, illustrious visitors and from our Heads of Department who do so much to realise the Academy's vision. It contains information about each department's successes and activities, and also integrates with Twitter so we can place our latest news immediately onto the site.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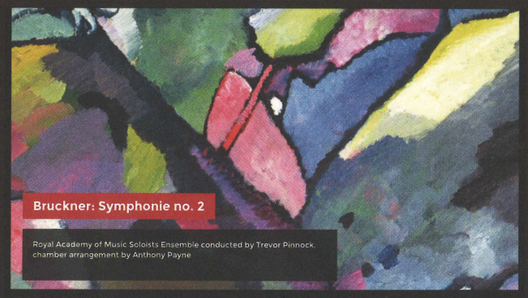
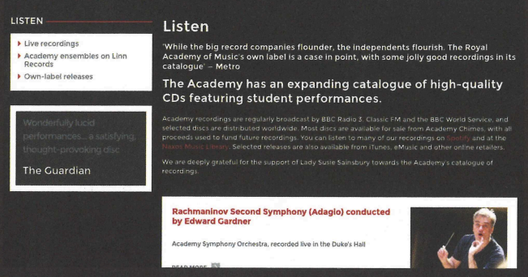
In the Theatre now: Royal Academy #Opera dress


Bruckner: Symphonie no. 2
Royal Academy of Music Soloists Ensemble conducted by Trevor Pinnock, chamber arrangement by Anthony Payne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Live recordings
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Own-label releases
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'While the big record companies flounder, the independents flourish. The Royal Academy of Music's own label is a case in point, with some jolly good recordings in its catalogue' – Metro
The Academy has an expanding catalogue of high-quality CDs featuring student performances.
Academy recordings are regularly broadcast by BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and the BBC World Service, and selected discs are distributed worldwide. Most discs are available for sale from Academy Chimes, with all proceeds used to fund future recordings. You can listen to many of our recordings on Spotify, and at the Naxos Music Library. Selected releases are also available from iTunes, eMusic and other online retailers.
We are deeply grateful for the support of Lady Susie Sainsbury towards the Academy's catalogue of recordings.
Rachmaninov Second Symphony (Adagio) conducted by Edward Gardner
Academy Symphony Orchestra, recorded live in the Duke's Hall

Listen: Live recordings from our concerts are now easily accessible on our website. From Semyon Bychkov conducting Ein Heldenleben to Bach Cantatas directed by Peter Schreier, excerpts from some of our best concerts are there for those who could not attend, or want to listen again.

Watch: Videos led by our students in numerous faculties give an insight into Academy life for prospective students. Video recordings of our ensembles performing in the Duke's Hall and the Academy Big Band at the Southbank Centre showcase our students' high calibre performances.

Follow: A live Twitter feed is embedded throughout the site with relevant Tweets filtered to each individual page. Visit the department pages to see just the latest news and events related to your instrument.

The results of the Research Excellence Framework 2014, published on 18th December 2014, provide external validation for the continued excellence of the Academy's research culture. In each of the three categories – research output, the research environment and research impact – over 60% of the Academy's submission was rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour'.

RESEARCH AT THE ACADEMY

Two of our research students introduce their latest projects:

How can the 'performance space' become a central protagonist in new work?
My compositions often make creative use of performance spaces in order to heighten perception of sound, structure, and the drama inherent in my musical material. My recent work The House of Asteria was written for soprano, four vertically separated quartets of clarinet and strings, video and the entire building of LSO St Luke's. The piece explores the dramatic interaction between "on-" and "off-stage" and seeks to establish an intense series of interrelationships between music, text, video, lighting, spatial choreography, and architecture.

Richard Bullen – Composition

How does the listener perceive the essence of a historical artefact when placed in a contemporary modern landscape?
My PhD thesis explores the process of taking documents from the past and placing them in a new contemporary musical framework. My interest lies in preserving the essence of these historical components, and emphasising their ancient character from a modern perspective. With the technological aspects of digital-delay processing, the exploitation of technology in an acoustic and electronic environment has informed my research. I will attempt to juxtapose current and old materials naturally as if there was no chronological gap.

Brian Mark – Composition

Recording Highlights

Maintaining the balance between tradition and innovation is essential. We uphold this equilibrium through the highest quality Principal-Study teaching alongside practical, industry-relevant understanding and opportunities that prepare and equip our students for modern careers.

From the phonograph, to magnetic tape, to digital, to whatever the next technology turns out to be – the world of music recording continues to develop. As always, changes present many exciting opportunities as well as challenges.

Our new lecture series on sound production, led by Amy Blier-Carruthers, aims to prepare musicians for the recording industry and dispel some of the mysteries that surround it for so many performing musicians.

Taking in the viewpoints of both producer and performer, the course gives students practical experience in both roles.

With decades of experience as a producer, the recording industry is of particular interest and an area of expertise for our Principal, Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood. Students are given the unique opportunity to learn from the Principal and his vast industry experience in the area.

At the Academy we are continually seeking ways to ensure our students are prepared for the professional world. In addition to a continually developing academic programme, the new concert space planned for above the theatre will incorporate recording facilities and add to our already excellent resources.

Kwabs (2013 Graduate)

Signed to Atlantic Records, Kwabs' highly anticipated debut album Love + War was released in May 2015. He has had over 50 million views on YouTube and was named one of The Guardian's Rising Stars of 2015.

Miloš Karadaglić (2006 Graduate)

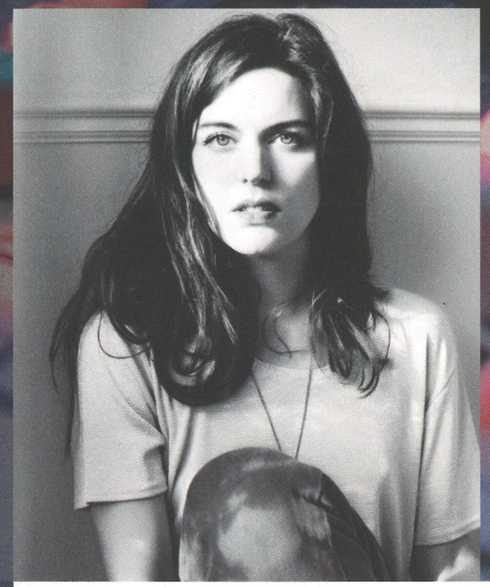
Miloš released his third album last year on Mercury Classics/Deutsche Grammophon. This album recorded with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin takes Rodrigo's iconic Concierto de Aranjuez as the starting point for a journey across the Spanish landscape, paying tribute to the great music and musicians that placed the modern classical guitar firmly on the international stage.

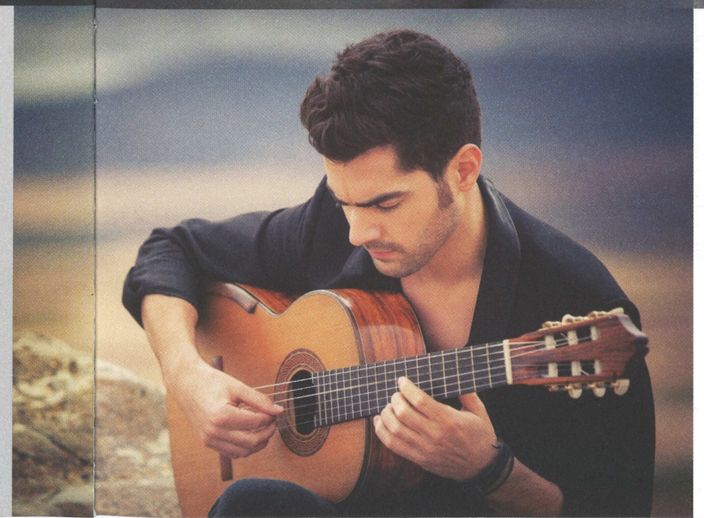
New York Times: 'one of the most exciting and communicative classical guitarists today.'

Ksenija Sidorova (2012 Graduate)

Ksenija's solo CD Fairy Tales recorded with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and conducted by Clark Rundell was released in July 2013. Further recording collaborations include Nicola Benedetti, Karl Jenkins and Miloš Karadaglić.

BBC Music Magazine: '... a debut recording full of panache and communicative musicianship.'





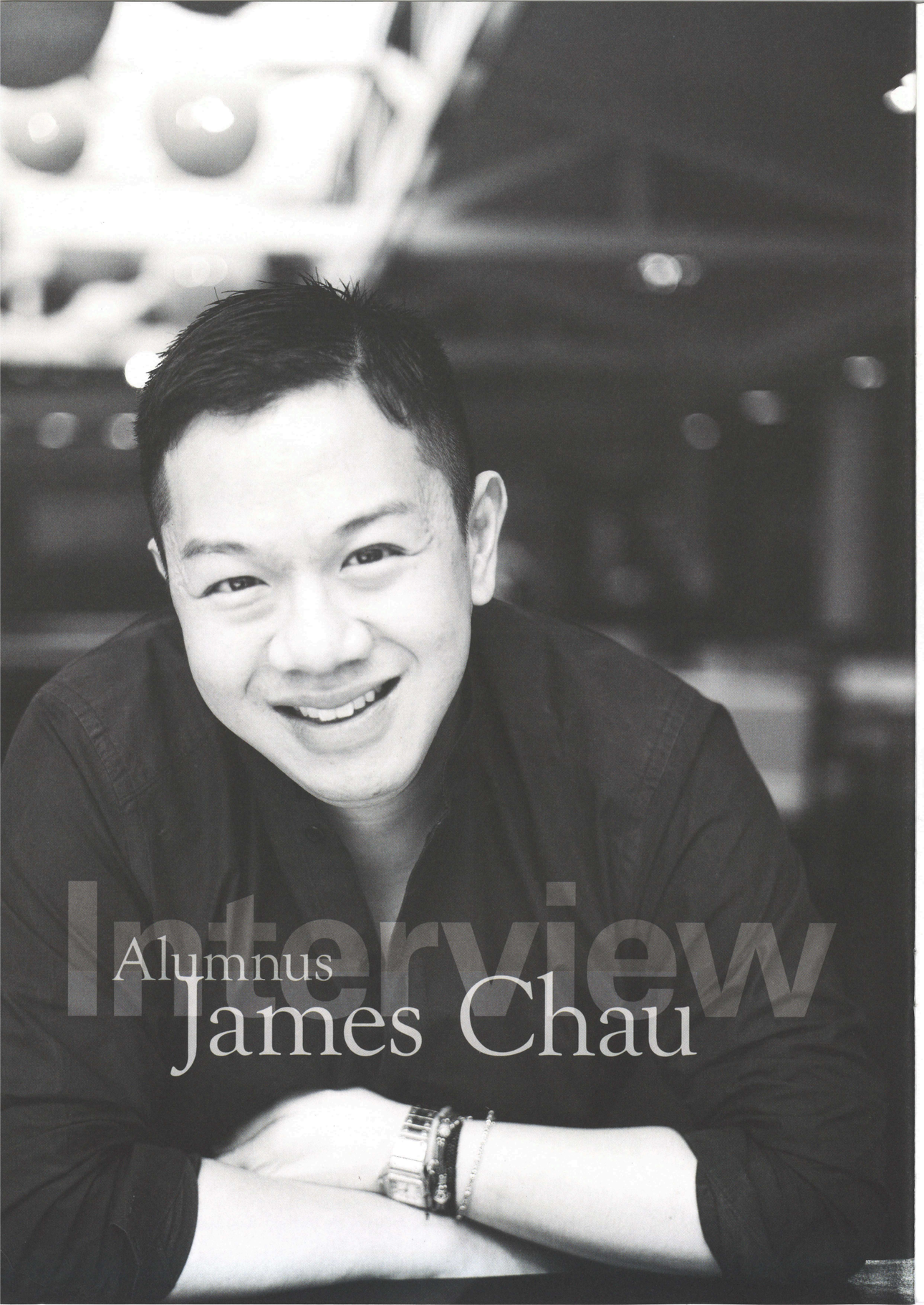
Olivia Chaney (2004 Graduate)

Olivia's debut album, The Longest River, was released in April 2015 to much critical acclaim.

The Sunday Times: 'a mesmerising debut.'

The Independent: 'not a note out of place on songs anatomising in acute emotional detail... A landmark release'

The New Yorker: 'Olivia Chaney and her harmonium are reinvigorating English folk music.'



Interview

Alumnus James Chau

Journalist, television presenter and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador James Chau has reported across the world and interviewed some of the world's most influential figures. James, who studied piano at Junior Academy, speaks to Rebecca Alexander about some of his recent projects and how music is still very much part of his job today.

RA: Congratulations on your recent appointment to the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders of 2015. Can you explain a little about the role and some of the issues you look forward to working on?

JC: The community of Young Global Leaders is a programme run by the World Economic Forum which recognises leaders under the age of forty. I was named YGL for my work in broadcast media and also in the fight against HIV and Aids. The YGL family each represent different areas of industry, government, non-profit, civil society and media. It is wonderful being a part of that mix, to be able to meet and engage with my peers – and most importantly to learn from them. I plan to bring all my 'causes' to the table. Firstly, health, not confined to HIV and Aids, and how we meet its challenges globally. Secondly, social inclusion: for me this has always been at the core of HIV and AIDS as we are not just talking about a disease but about law enforcement, drugs, sexual violence, equality between sexes and ages, and so on. And thirdly – and I have already forewarned them about this – there's music. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, says the world is more unsafe now than at any time since the end of the Second World War. In a world and in societies where religion, language, politics cause so much divide, music can heal and be a common language. Music has always had the role of being a facilitator and a neutral entry point.

RA: Do you still find time to play the piano?

JC: I do and I am so glad that you asked me this week and not last week! A few days ago I pulled the piano out into the centre of the room and moved all the furniture around because I want music to return to the centre of my life. There was a time – and many people reading this interview will identify with this — when for me there was nothing but music. I miss it a lot. My career has gone in other directions but I still play the piano and hopefully will one day be able to perform again. But I think I need to go back to playing my scales again first! And really get the feeling back into the fingers – the heart never goes and the soul never leaves, but technique needs to be rediscovered. I have vivid memories of my time at the Academy, and how transformative it was for me. I have been thinking about the Academy so much recently during my practising, and when I joined the Board of Trustees at the Menuhin Competition.

RA: As a Trustee of the Menuhin Competition, are you looking forward to coming back to your 'old home', the Academy?

JC: I'm really, really thrilled. I can't wait to see the Duke's Hall, I always loved going in there for concerts, maybe to go back up to the rooms where I had my lessons. At that time, up on the second floor to the left and opposite Christopher Elton's room was my professor, Graeme Humphrey. In the opposite direction, we did our chamber music. I would love to go back to those rooms, and I would love to hear some of today's students. It is such a thrill to not only be a part of this competition now, but that the year I get involved we are preparing to return to London for the centenary of Lord Menuhin's birth, and for it to be in, what you so kindly said, my 'old home'. It seems to be the perfect marriage. So many wonderful memories are being put together, but more importantly so many new opportunities are opening up for us to promote the power of music, and the individual talents of these extraordinary players, to a global audience.

RA: Talking about careers, is it true that you speculatively called China Central Television and asked for a job? What would be your advice to students looking to succeed in their career?

JC: Absolutely, I was watching television and I knew I wanted to work at CCTV. So I turned on CCTV, watched the news, and waited for the screen credits at the end of the programme

to roll. I waited for the last name to appear on the screen credit and wrote it down – this person had to be the most important one, I reasoned. I didn't want to call the HR department. If you think you have something to offer then why not go straight to the top or to the person able to make the hiring decision. I found the main CCTV number. This is a television network of approximately 10,000 staff. When I asked for the person's name I had copied down the switchboard hung up on me, I think three times, because they couldn't understand me. On the fourth call they put me through to the English language department and the person I was asking for picked up the phone. I thought gosh this person is so important, I knew I had to think really fast, this was my one opportunity. So I said to him: 'I'm a journalist, I work in Hong Kong for TVB news and I would love to come and work for you.' We had a short conversation and he asked me to call back in a week. I literally counted down the days! I never assume anyone remembers me, even today. So in seven days' time when I did call him back I said: 'You won't remember me but last week you were very kind. I know you are so busy. To make it easy would I be able to send you my show reel and CV to see if I am even vaguely anything you are looking for.' He agreed, and within a week he called me back and offered me a job.

It is a funny story but with a much wider significance. What I got out of it, and what I would share with current Academy students, is there are so many ways to achieving your goals in life and there are so many roads you can travel to reach that destination – not only the shortest or the most efficient ones. It is really important to be reliable and to follow up. Never underestimate yourself. I was always a little insecure and probably am in some ways still, but you can often downplay your abilities. Believe in what you do, because if you don't believe in yourself a stranger won't. Be ambitious but not pushy, courageous but not overweening, and be confident but never ungracious. And allow your authentic personality to shine – because that is how people connect, and that's how humans find something special in one an other.

RA: One final question, what did you learn from your time at the Academy?

JC: Going to the Academy was a transformative experience in wonderful and positive ways which I still carry with me today. First off, to get accepted was to legitimise people who said 'you are talented' or 'you can play well'. This is a certain community of people who are truly talented and that I was privileged to be amongst, it gave me a lot of confidence and a direction. It is a highly stimulating environment with a lot of people who are not only intellectual, but perhaps in their ordinary school environment, were considered a little 'weird'. I didn't have a great time at my high school. You were always seen as the odd one out because maybe you wanted to go and play the piano, and were not necessarily interested in football or rugby. When I went to the Academy, everybody was 'weird' – and that in fact made me closer to the norm, or at least what the norm is considered to be. And I learnt this: to be 'weird' was actually quite a compliment.

I think all of us are special, no matter whether we can play a musical instrument or not, but I think that being in that highly stimulating environment really brought me awareness that this was global quality. I wish I had studied a lot harder and that is where I would have my regrets. I think it is good to have regrets, enough so that it stings and you never do the same thing again. In hindsight I wish someone had pulled me aside and told me how lucky I was to be there and that you have the opportunity to be the best. Had I realised that then, when I was twelve years old, I may have taken it a lot more seriously. Although I didn't necessarily achieve through music hopefully I have a chance of achieving in other areas of my life today, personally and also professionally. If I do it is because of that very early lesson, that at twelve years old you had an opportunity to do something amazing.

Everyone who studies at the Academy is blessed with a truly precious and incredible musical gift; and I know some people don't agree with me, but I believe it is their duty to hone and refine it through the infrastructure that the Academy offers. What they may see as normal, especially within the Academy environment where everyone is of at least a brilliant standard, to the outside world is truly something quite unique.

Musicians have a crucial role to play in today's world. For example Lord Menuhin, to me growing up, was not just a violinist, not just a conductor, but a humanist. Music is not detached from the realities of the world – from acts of terrorism, conflicts, aviation crashes, all of which I have covered as a journalist. Lord Menuhin, during and after the Second World War, used his music to work towards reconciliation. Music can heal and brings out beautiful humanist qualities in each one of us. I think I began to learn all this about music aged twelve. That's why the Academy has probably been the single most magical experience I have ever had, and probably ever will have.

Since its inception in 1935, the Junior Academy programme has nurtured many generations of enthusiastic and committed musicians, preparing them for further study at undergraduate level. This year Junior Academy celebrates its eightieth anniversary. A programme of events celebrates the achievements of both current and former Junior Academy students:

We always enjoy hearing from Junior Academy alumni – whether they left just last year, or more decades ago than they care to remember! If you studied here and it's a while since you've been in touch, do please drop us a line with your latest news. If you'd like to share memories of your time here, so much the better – and if you're ever in the area you'll be very welcome to join us for any of our public events.

See www.ram.ac.uk/events for more information.

JUNIOR ACADEMY 80 YEARS

THE MENUHIN COMPETITION

The Menuhin Competition – the world's leading competition for violinists under the age of twenty-two – will be coming to the Academy in 2016, Yehudi Menuhin's centenary year.

Call out to Alumni

Were you at the Academy during the 1990s?
We would love to hear about your experience and memories of Lord Menuhin's visits to the Academy.

Send us an email:
publicity@ram.ac.uk
or Tweet us:
@RoyalAcadMusic

Founded by Yehudi Menuhin in 1983 and taking place in a different international city every two years, the Competition returns to London in 2016 after first being held here in 2004. The Competition is indeed coming 'home' to London, where Lord Menuhin lived for so many years and in particular to the Academy, where we can celebrate many close links with him. Surely everyone who studied or worked here in the 1990s will have vivid memories of his regular working visits to the Academy.

In 2004, a few years after he died, the Academy became the custodian of the Foyle Menuhin Archive – an extraordinarily comprehensive collection. We are delighted to host this major event, and to be one of the organisations which will contribute to its status as not 'only' a competition but a complete festival of violin playing. Competitors will move to the Southbank Centre for the final round of the senior competition, but all of the early rounds will take place in the Duke's Hall.

Associated events will include masterclasses – a celebration of our unrivalled violin teaching faculty – a significant new Menuhin exhibition in our Museum and a series of performances by Academy student ensembles.

ENTREPRENEURS

We aim to nurture outstanding musicians in a broad range of disciplines, encouraging the individuality and creative personality of each student. It is increasingly important that students are prepared for a world where promotional and entrepreneurial skills are integral to success.

One of the opportunities for our students to step into the business world is in our long-standing partnership with the Deutsche Bank Award for Creative Enterprises. Now in its twenty-second year, the Deutsche Bank Award offers start up capital and provides recipients with business training and mentoring to help with their first year of business.

This year's winner was Academy Masters student Alyson Frazier and her project 'Play for Progress'.

Play for Progress:
Music.
Healing.
Action.

This March marked the first anniversary of the founding of Play for Progress, an initiative by American flautist Alyson Frazier and vocalist and medical doctor Anna MacDonald, which uses music as a tool for healing, education and connection in recent conflict zones.

Play for Progress was established during Alyson's postgraduate studies at the Academy and is supported by the Deutsche Bank Award for Creative Enterprise 2014. Since its inception, it has established programmes with refugees in Thailand, traumatised communities in Northern Iraq, and with unaccompanied foreign minors who have registered with the Refugee Council UK.

Play for Progress delivers therapeutic and educational music programmes to children who are victims of war and displacement. By partnering with non-governmental organisations around the world, PFP utilises safe spaces established by the global Child Protection Working Group to provide activities that promote healthy means of expression, the awareness of cultural traditions, and encourage positive peer recreation and self-discovery.

Play for Progress delivers projects in communities where the basics of survival are available, but where emotional education, therapy services and children's activities are not. These communities are often caught in a difficult situation where their citizens, particularly young people, are attempting to transition into more stable living, but without the healthy emotional wellbeing that is necessary to move forward.

Play for Progress aims to combat the void left by violence and conflict with music and healing. The programmes provide the creative playing time and emotional therapy that is necessary for traumatised children to start on the journey to becoming happy, healthy children who act as positive forces in their communities.

As I write, just two weeks ago the PFP team returned from Myanmar and Thailand, having conducted a month-long programme at 'KM42', a rural school for migrant Burmese children. Supported by Spanish NGO Colabora Birmania, the school provides a safe place for the children of local farmers to recreate and learn – a vital service given that 70% of the local population has been exploited by the active rings of human trafficking, drug trafficking and mafia in the area.

Over the course of the programme, the PFP team worked with every child enrolled at the school, conducting workshops that addressed and enhanced students' confidence levels, abilities to work with others, their comfort and willingness to address and share their emotions, and their ability to use music as a tool for emotional processing and enjoyment. The workshops included rhythm and singing games, world music listening and exploration, creative expression, movement, and instrumental teaching among others.

While planning the Thailand project, we laid out objectives. Among them, we included the hope that children with whom we worked would be more likely to be actively involved in rebuilding and contributing to their communities. Following our emotionally impacting and positive experience in Thailand with such wonderfully receptive Burmese children, we are delighted to report that the Play for Progress programme works beautifully. We cannot wait to return to the site and work more with the children and the local communities.

Article by Alyson Frazier

For more information and recent updates about the project follow **@PlayForProgress** or see **www.playforprogress.com**

Previous winners of the Deutsche Bank Award at the Royal Academy of Music:

Tom Green, Jazz trombonist, composer and arranger Jazzwise magazine's 'One to Watch 2014'

Catriona Price, part of traditional duo Twelfth Day 'Lush orchestral colours... Bang up to date.' The Sunday Times

Taking to the Stage

As we look forward to Royal Academy Opera decanting and performing in theatres across London, we asked a couple of students to reflect on their experiences of preparing and performing in our opera productions over the past year.

Mezzo-soprano Claire Barnett-Jones, The Rake's Progress:

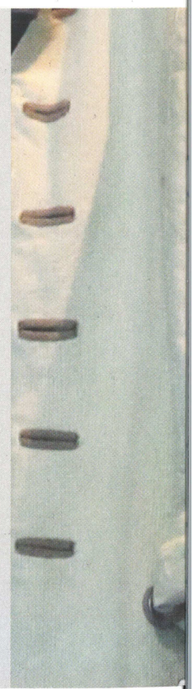
I didn't know Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress well before the choice was announced. I knew the role of Baba the Turk, and was so excited that I would be playing her. She is a character of much depth and honesty, which compared with the rest of the characters in the piece is rare. She also gets some fabulous music, with the highlight being her plate-smashing aria of 'Scorned, Abused, Rejected'. During the process I got to realise what a fantastic choice of repertoire this is for a young group of singers. It is vocally and dramatically satisfying, and also helps focus on the clarity of English text. There were definitely some obstacles to overcome with the complex rhythms and harmonies, but we all rose to the challenge.

There were a couple of moments that stood out during the rehearsal process. Firstly, we had to practise smashing plates. Until we had the stage plates, we were using camping crockery, which when thrown went in one direction. It wasn't until the first stage and piano rehearsals that we started to use the real ones, and swiftly discovered that shards of plate would go in any direction they liked, whether it be on our lovely répétiteur Richard or into the first three rows of the theatre. We were endlessly given notes about throwing the plates further up stage! The second was in the dress rehearsal where we were using Baba's lovely beard, moustache and wig for the first time. When Baba enters she is in a sedan chair, and it is not until later in the scene when Tom Rakewell addresses Baba that he sees her. Due to my lovely Tom, Bradley Smith, being on stage when I was getting preened, he had not seen the full extent of my transformation, and as soon as he turned round to face me he couldn't help but be taken aback and the next few lines were interesting through the choked giggles! And as the chorus came on to marvel at Baba, there was a genuine sense of shock and amazement.

The project was truly incredible. Jane Glover and John Ramster both gave so much to the piece as well as being so supportive to us all. A production like this, with a relatively small principal cast really makes you bond together and keep each other going. I just wish now that we could take it on tour and do it all over again!

Undergraduate violinist Clara Garde, Puccini Double Bill:

It was a real pleasure to play for a Royal Academy Opera production for the first time recently, and to be embedded right inside one of the Academy's highest profile events of the year. Puccini's music is so energetic and fun to play, so the orchestral rehearsals were very enjoyable even before we started to work with the singers. But the most exciting and memorable moment was the first rehearsal when everybody came together in the theatre. We were so connected to the singers, it almost felt like we were on the stage ourselves with them. It was very impressive to see them all in their costumes, rushing around the colourful set. I can't wait to do more opera!



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